

TUITION BENEFIT PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

GENERAL GUIDELINES (applies to all City employees):

- **Employees NOT covered by the City's Tuition Benefit Program are:** Milwaukee Public Schools, HACM, RACM, WCD and MEDC employees.
- **Part-Time Employees** are eligible to receive prorated Tuition Benefits provided they work a **minimum** of 20 hours per week.
- **A receipt must be provided for ALL reimbursement requests.** However, courses offered in Employee Relations' **Training Bulletins** do not require a receipt as the registration is paid up-front by Employee Relations and *deducted* from your Tuition Benefit balance.
 - **Acceptable Receipts** include: cash register, cashier's check, money order, credit card statement, receipts/statements provided by the school or organization, canceled check (*you must provide a copy of both sides; check carbons are **not** acceptable receipts.*)
- **The reimbursement is based on the calendar year (January - December)** and is **always** applied to the year in which the course, seminar, conference or convention **begins**, *no matter when the application is submitted or the tuition/registration fee was paid.*
 - For Membership Dues, the reimbursement comes out of the year in which the Enrollment Period of the membership begins.
- **The Tuition Benefit only covers "out-of-pocket" expenses and does NOT cover:**
 - Tuition paid for through grants, scholarships and veteran's benefits. An employee can apply for tuition that is **not** covered by grants, scholarships and veteran's benefits up to their yearly tuition benefit limit. *On the application, please list only the tuition cost that was paid out-of-pocket.*
 - The tuition benefit does **not** provide reimbursement of software, personal computers or laptops, or...
 - Non-required textbooks, union dues, finance charges, sales tax, licenses**, certifications**, examinations**, shipping/handling charges, late fees, administrative fees, I.D. fees, travel expenses (*i.e. lodging, meals, mileage*), parking fees, magazine/journal/ periodical subscriptions, equipment* or supplies*.
 - a) *** Only certain bargaining units are eligible for required equipment and supply reimbursement.** See the "Tuition Benefit Amounts Chart" or labor contract for specifics.
 - b) **** Only Management Pay Plan employees are eligible for job-related license, certification and exam reimbursement.**
- **"On City-Time" Use of Tuition Benefit**
Most unions and employee groups are eligible to take **CRITICAL, JOB-RELATED COURSES** on City-Time. Courses must be approved by their Supervisor or Department Head **and** Employee Relations. ALL other courses, seminars and conferences must be taken on the employee's own time. Please call 286-3387 with any questions, or send email to aknick@milwaukee.gov.
- **Taxes** -- ALL courses, seminars, conferences, membership dues, licenses and certifications are **nontaxable**. The reimbursement is added to your gross total, but not to taxable earnings and **no** withholdings will be taken.
- **Seasonal Layoff and Unpaid Leaves of Absence**
If you started a course prior to going on seasonal layoff or an unpaid leave of absence, you will receive your reimbursement check when you return to work. You must still send in the application, receipts and completion statements within four (4) months of the end of the course. However, if you start a course while on an unpaid, involuntary Leave of Absence or Layoff, you are not eligible to receive tuition reimbursement.
- **Resignations from City Employment**
Employees must remain in service for a 6-month period after the successful completion date of approved courses, seminars or conferences or the amount reimbursed will be **deducted** from the employee's final paycheck. For Membership Dues, Licenses or Certifications employees must remain in service for a 6-month period after reimbursement of such fees or the amount reimbursed will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

Employees will not receive reimbursement if they leave prior to completion. *Employees of Local 215, MPFFA, must remain in service for a 1-year period.*

- **Exceptions are:** Retirements, transfers to MPS, positions eliminated due to budget cuts, or tuition reimbursement used by employee at the department's request.

COURSES, SEMINARS, CONFERENCES AND CONVENTIONS:

1. If you want to know in advance if a course, seminar, conference or convention will be approved for reimbursement, please call 286-3650 or 286-3387.
2. You should always apply for reimbursement ***as soon as possible***, but within four (4) months of completing a course, seminar, conference or convention.
3. Eligible employees may receive reimbursement of courses, seminars, conferences or conventions that are *directly related to their present position or relate to a reasonable promotional or transfer opportunity within City of Milwaukee government*.
4. Textbooks are reimbursable only if they are **required**, by the instructor, for a successfully completed course.
5. **Grade Reports and Completion Statements:**
All courses, seminars or conferences of more than three (3) weeks in length, require proof of **successful completion**. *A Grade Report must be submitted for any college course, no matter the length.*
 - a. A grade of "C" or higher is **required** for undergraduate-level courses.
 - b. A grade of "B" or higher is **required** for graduate-level courses.
 - c. "Mid-Term" grade reports are NOT acceptable. Please submit a "Final" grade report.
 - d. When grades are not given or a course of study taken is non-credit and more than three weeks in length, a certificate or written statement from the school or organization is required.
 - e. Conferences, conventions and seminars of less than three (3) weeks in length do not require a grade report or completion statement.

MEMBERSHIP DUES REIMBURSEMENT:

Most but not all employees are eligible to receive reimbursement of Membership Dues. See the *Tuition Benefit Amounts Chart* for specifics, or the union contract.

1. For *Membership Dues* please apply ***as soon as possible***, but within four (4) months of paying for memberships.
2. **Membership Dues Benefits Do Not Cover:**
Non-required textbooks, union dues, finance charges, sales tax, licenses**, certifications**, examinations**, shipping/handling charges, late and administrative fees, travel expenses (*IE: lodging, meals, mileage*), parking fees, magazine/journal/ periodical subscriptions, *equipment or *supplies.
3. Organizations **must** be nonprofit, nonsectarian and established for the expressed purpose of providing information, resources and programming that benefit its members in their professional specialties.
4. Membership dues are **always** applied to the year in which the enrollment period **begins**. Membership dues reimbursement DOES NOT include union dues or journal subscriptions.

LICENSE AND CERTIFICATION REIMBURSEMENT:

- **ONLY** *Management Pay Plan* employees are eligible for **job-related** license, certification and exam reimbursement. (*Includes exams and self-study materials that are directly related to the certification.*)

THE TUITION BENEFIT DOES NOT COVER:

- Airfare
- Equipment or Supplies (*including, but not limited to calculators, disks, software, PC's, notebooks, paper, pencils, etc.*) *Only certain bargaining units are eligible for **required** equipment or supplies.*
- Certification Fees/Renewals (*only Management Pay Plan employees are eligible*)
- Examination Fees (*only Management Pay Plan employees are eligible*)

- Finance charges
- I.D. Fees
- Interest charges
- Late fees
- License fees and renewals (*only Management Pay Plan employees are eligible*)
- Lodging
- Meals
- Mileage
- Parking fees
- Part-time employees with less than 20 hours per week.
- Sales tax
- Shipping and handling charges
- Subscriptions to magazines, journals or periodicals (*also applies to Membership Dues reimbursement*)
- Textbooks that are NOT required for a successfully completed course
- Transfer of Credit Fees
- Union dues
- Courses where the tuition was paid by a grant, scholarship or state/federal veteran's benefits.
- Courses, seminars or conferences that began or were attended **prior** to City employment.
- Courses, seminars or conferences that began or were attended **during** an unpaid and/or voluntary leave of absence (*i.e., voluntary layoff, education leave of absence, etc.*)

Seasonal Layoff and Leaves of Absence:

If you started a course **prior** to going on a seasonal layoff or unpaid leave of absence, you will receive your reimbursement when you return to work. However, anything begun during a seasonal layoff or unpaid leave of absence is not reimbursable.